

David Shepherd family had vital role in days of early Washougal

By EDNA TAYLOR

There are some who say that the David Shepherd family, when they left Scotland, sailed "round the Horn" and landed in San Francisco, with Mrs. Shepherd staying there with some of the children while the father, with three of the older boys, came north to locate a home for the family.

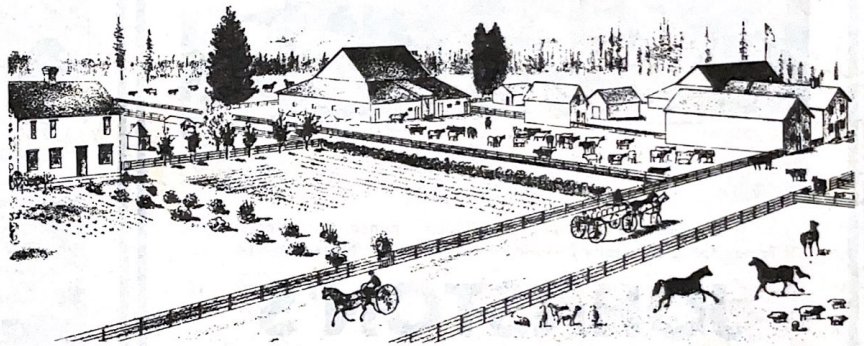
Then there are those who think the family came across country from the east coast.

An amusing story is told of Mrs. Shepherd, who while waiting for her husband's return, was asked if they were from "the old country." Rather haughtily she replied, in her best Scotch, "No! We are from Scotland."

This DLC started at the present Russell St. on the east and reached west to what is now Webber St., from the Washougal River on the north to the Columbia, and later bought additional land.

The site of the family home was where the Carret family live now on E. Second Avenue, across from the "big barn"

Isabel, a young lady of 18 when they arrived here, was married in 1880 to Joseph Erni and they made their home on the 225-acre farm, through which the Forest Hill road now winds from the Evergreen Highway to the mountain top. Many homes line this scenic road today, and the farm has been broken up into several smaller acreages.



THE DAVID SHEPHERD home, 1½ miles east of Washougal, as it looked to an artist in this 1885 drawing. A native of Scotland, Shepherd migrated to Portland in 1875, liked the climate and returned home for his wife. The Shepherds first settled in the Ridgefield area, but moved to Washougal in 1878 where he had acquired a 2,000 acre cattle ranch.

What a pity that the school was not named Shepherd School...

Whatever the facts, all agree that David and Helen Shepherd located near Ridgefield in 1876, with their seven sons, John, James, William, David, George, Alex and Tom and their three daughters, Helen, Isabel and Christina. Another daughter, Margaret, died, age six years, in the homeland.

They moved to Washougal two years later, buying the Stiles donation land claim of 850 acres.

The couple had two daughters, Helen and Marie. Both live in Washougal. (Marie married John Hutchinson and they had five children, four of whom are living. Kenneth is with the Air Force in Germany; Marjorie and Alice live in Seattle; and George Wesley lives with his parents. Helen (Nellie) Erni lives a few blocks from her sister.

In '93, the Erni family traveled in Europe, visiting his native Switzerland and

Isabel her beloved Scotland. When they returned, it was the time of the "big flood" of the Columbia in 1894.

Mr. Erni died in 1911, and Mrs. Erni lived until 1941. She had been a member of the Washougal Grange since 1886.

The ground for the first church in Washougal at First and Durgan was deeded to the Congregational Church by David and Helen Shepherd, March 20, 1882. (Many thanks to Bernard Newby, who searched the records to establish this fact so that it could be incorporated into this story.)

On Nov. 5, 1882, a small church building (the present Carl Guenther home) was dedicated under the name Bethel Congregational

Church and D. L. Russel, David Shepherd and J. E. Durgan were elected trustees.

A few years later, on Dec. 6, 1890, the Shepherds donated an acre of land at what is now Second Avenue and Ash Street in Washougal for the site of a school building. In 1891 and 1892, a two-story structure was built here, with two rooms on each floor.

This served until 1925, when the building was razed and the present Washougal High School was erected on the site. What a pity that the school was not named "Shepherd School," in honor of the civic-minded pioneers who donated the land on which the school stands.

George, John and Tom

never married, and John, James, Tom and Alex lived their lives out in Washougal.

George was a Portland attorney; James married Annie Gibbons, a sister of Jake Gibbons; William married Molly Durgan, and their two children now live in Portland. David was in the Spanish American War, married and lived in Idaho. Alex married Eleanor Wheeler, who still lives on a part of her husband's farm, which has been built up into city homes and streets, but another part of it became the Orchard Hills Golf and Country Club.

Isabel's sisters married natives of Scotland; Helen became Mrs. John Mitchell, living in Salem; and Christina married James Hood, and they lived on Government Island.
